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Integrating Islamic Teachings into School Counselling: Bridging Spiritual and Educational Guidance

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Abstract

The current study aims to examine the critical role of school counselling for students as an integrated approach that builds on Islamic teachings and Seerah. The study showcases a spiritual dimension of education that can help students develop noble qualities as their character traits. For this, a comprehensive classical perspective on emotional, behavioural, and moral guidance has been explored along with contemporary Western counselling theories. The study employed a qualitative approach drawn from a psychological perspective to present a comparative analysis of Islamic counselling principles. Correspondingly, several case studies, historical examples, and modern theories have been analysed in light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah to demonstrate the traditional and contemporary educational system that lacks practical application of faith and Islamic principles in counselling. Additionally, the findings underscored a strong congruence between Islamic principles and many evidence-based counselling practices, while also highlighting key differences that co-exist in society. The study highlighted that by implementing an integrated approach based on Islamic teachings, school counselling can be regulated through common cultural relevance and student engagement that can ultimately leads to moral development for Muslim students, Thus, it encompasses that such initiatives can be helpful for educationist, policymakers, and counsellors for Islamic curriculum development and institutionalized Islamic teaching.

Keywords: education system, educational guidance, Islamic teaching, Islamic principles, school counselling, spiritual dimension

Introduction

The contemporary era of globalisation has brought a significant change at an unprecedented level of complexity, not only in education but also across all sectors of society. This indicates that now societies have become interconnected not only in education, but also in moral and ethical values. Unfortunately, the traditional mode of education was limited only to transferring knowledge to learners; however, now the contemporary student-centred approach signifies a holistic change that

also considers character development and counselling as a central pillar.[1] Therefore, Islam is not only a guideline but also a fundamental catalyst for forming human character as a whole. Character development does not occur automatically; however, it requires character education according to Islamic principles that can lead to noble qualities.[2] Guidance and counselling have a centeral role in supporting students to overcome various problems concerning learning behaviours, academic achievements, and personality development.[3] In this context, it could be said that Islamic education requires an integrated approach with Islamic principles for solving students' problems.[4] Since laying the foundation of character development, counselling and guidance have become a widespread need and trend in accordance with the human soul and body. Counselling is a type of therapy that aims to deal with psychological, cognitive, and behavioural problems. The World Health Organisation has stated that "counselling entails the application of mental health, psychological problems through systematic management of behavioural strategies."[5]

Considering the diverse role of these aforementioned problems, the trend has now shifted towards Islamic counsellors, who are considered insightful implementers of Islamic principles. There can even be stigma around seeking therapy, partly due to perceptions that counselling is a secular or "Western" concept at odds with faith.[6] This tension raises an important question: how can we bridge modern school counselling with the rich heritage of spiritual and moral guidance in Islam?[7]

The need for counselling in schools emerged as paramount to promote psychological and physical health.[8] With the rapid growth of the Muslim population in Europe and other parts of the world, counselling has emerged as an essential field, evolving from traditional vocational guidance

[1]Mohd Khir Johari Abas, Md Noor Saper, Nurul 'Ain Mohd Daud, "Exploring School Counsellors' Knowledge of Islamic Counselling," *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies* 11, (1) (2024): 1-11. https://doi.org/10.24191/jcis.v11i1.3; M. K. Briggs, and A. D. Rayle, "Incorporating Spirituality Into Core Counseling Courses: Ideas for Classroom Application," *Counseling and Values* 50 (October 2005): 63–76; S. Hanin Hamjah, and N. S. Mat Akhir, "Islamic Approach in Counseling," *Journal of Religion and Health* 53, (2014): 279-289. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-013-9703-4

[2]G. Miller, "The Development of the Spiritual Focus in Counseling and Counselor Education," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 77, (1999): 498–501; S. F. Dailey, J. R. Curry, M. C. Harper, H. J. Hartwig Moorhead, and C. S. Gill, "Exploring the Spiritual Domain: Tools for Integrating Spirituality and Religion and Counseling," *Vistas Online*, (2011): 2–12; N. M. Nor, S. M. S. Abdullah, and S. N. H. A Rahman, "Islamic Counseling Approach by Abdullah Nasih Ulwan for Preventing Aggressive Behaviour Among School Students," *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 4 (7), (2019): 1–10. https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v4i7.302

[3]A. Hari Witono, "Peran Bimbingan Dan Konseling Dalam Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusif," [The Role of Guidance and Counseling in the Implementation of Inclusive Education], *Progres Pendidikan* [Educational Progress], 1 (3), (2020): 154–167. https://doi.org/10.29303/prospek.v1i3.20

[4]C. B. Mulyatno, "Pengalaman Para Guru dalam Melaksanakan Pembelajaran Setelah Berakhirnya Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat," [Teachers' Experience in Implementing Learning After the End of the Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions], *Jurnal Basicedu* 6 (5), (2022): 7997–7805. https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i5.3594

[5]G. Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2016).

[6]Afaf Osman, Ssekamanya Siraje Abdallah, Abdulfatai Olohunfunmi Ismail, "The Counseling Challenges Facing Muslim Clients across the World," *IIUM Journal of Educational Studies* 9 (3), (2021): 2–16. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijes.v9i3.399

[7]Dedi Junaedi, Sahliah Sahliah, Siti Hajar, and Hermansyah Hermansyah, "Guidance and Counseling in Islamic Perspective [Review of *Guidance and Counseling in Islamic Perspective*]," In 3th *Siliwangi Annual International Conference on Guidance Counseling (SAICGC)* (Vol. 3). (2024): 71-79, https://ojs.aeducia.org/index.php/saicgc/article/view/39/25

[8]G Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling.*

into a more comprehensive developmental approach. While modern counselling theories and techniques are predominantly rooted in secular frameworks—focusing on personal growth, mental health, and career development—they often overlook the spiritual dimensions integral to many clients' worldviews. In Islamic teachings, mental and spiritual health are inseparable, and well-being is understood holistically. Core Islamic values—such as faith (*īmān*), moral character (*akhlāq*), and the remembrance of God (*dhikr*)—play a central role in shaping human behaviour but are typically not addressed explicitly within secular counselling models.[9]

A number of scholars and practitioners have called for integrating Islamic principles into counselling to improve its relevance and effectiveness for Muslim students. Historically, religious and spiritual beliefs are connected that has a social multidimensional phenomenon that incorporates both the subjective individual quest for finding purpose and meaning. Studies have indicated that these beliefs concerning religion and spirituality are sources of strength for many students; for example, over 60% of students in one survey said their religious faith helped them to cope with stress.[10] Ignoring this dimension can render school counselling less effective or even alienating. Indeed, some Muslims feel that purely secular therapy might conflict with their beliefs. On the other hand, Islamic history and scholarly tradition contain extensive guidance on emotional and behavioural matters that could enrich modern counselling. Muslim psychologists, such as Malik Badri, have observed that many core counselling values (empathy, unconditional positive regard, sincerity) are not new to Islam – they were exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and emphasized in the Qur'ān.[11] By examining classical Islamic guidance alongside contemporary counselling theories, substantial common ground can be observed despite important distinctions. This presents an opportunity to develop a more holistic school counselling framework, one that is both academically sound and spiritually grounded.

Despite the progress, gaps still exist in the literature regarding counselling that should be integrated into schooling. This study highlighted that there is a lack of comprehensive literature on Islamically integrated school counselling, which is an integral component for character and personality development of students. The study follows a structured approach and provides analysis by building on the following sub-sections. Section 2 provides a brief literature review and historical insights. Section 3 then offers an insight into the methodology and theoretical framework that builds upon Islamic teachings. Section 4 provides a comparative analysis and discussion on the aforementioned gap with textual validation; subsequently, the last section concludes the study with research implications and recommendations for educators and policymakers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Evolution of Western School Counselling

To appreciate the integration of counselling and *Seerah* challenge, it is important to understand the development and assumptions of Western school counselling. Modern counselling

[9]Angie Cucchi, "Integrating Cognitive Behavioural and Islamic Principles in Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Narrative Review," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61 (2022): 4849-4870. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01576-8

[10]Shilpa Aggarwal, Judith C. Wright, Amy J. Morgan, George C. Patton, Nicola Reavley, "Religiosity and Spirituality in the Prevention and Management of Depression and Anxiety in Young People: A Systematic Review And Meta-Analysis," *BMC Psychiatry* 23, 729, (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-05091-2

[11]Abdullah Rothman, Alisha Ahmed, and Rania Awaad, "The Contributions and Impact of Malik Badri," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 39 (1-2), (2022): 190–213. https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v39i1-2.3142

in the West grew from industrial-era vocational guidance in the early 1900s and expanded mid-century to address the personal and social development of students. By the late 20th century, comprehensive models (like the American School Counsellor Association's framework) aimed to support students' academic, career, and personal/social needs through preventive and developmental interventions. This evolution occurred largely within a secular humanist context. As Jafari (1993) notes, the counseling profession's knowledge base and techniques were shaped by Western socio-moral values and a worldview that had, since the Renaissance, compartmentalized or even rejected religious influence. The Renaissance and Enlightenment eras were characterized by a sharply negative reaction to church authority, resulting in an enduring separation of the spiritual and material realms in intellectual life.[12] Psychotherapy pioneers like Freud viewed religion with skepticism, and many early psychological theories either ignored spirituality or treated it as a symptom of pathology. Thus, mainstream counseling inherited a largely secular stance – "maintaining that God exists but is not concerned with material existence," which contrasts with Islam's holistic view.[13]

Despite this secular origin, Western counselling does embrace values like empathy, positive regard, and ethical care for clients, which are universally relevant. Person-centred therapy, developed by Carl Rogers, emphasizes the therapist's empathetic understanding and unconditional positive regard for the client.[14] In contrast, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) focuses on identifying irrational thoughts and promoting behaviour change through structured interventions.[15] Complementing these, developmental guidance approaches prioritize age-appropriate support and life skills education within school settings, aiming to foster students' overall growth and adjustment. These models have been empirically validated across many cultures – yet their implicit neutrality toward religion can limit their resonance in religious communities. Indeed, researchers have long debated whether Western counselling concepts can be transplanted into non-Western cultural soil without modification. Clients' help-seeking behaviors, definitions of health, and coping styles are influenced by culture and faith. If counselors are unaware of, for example, a Muslim student's religious coping (like supplication or trust in God), they might overlook important aspects of that student's worldview.

2.2. Islamic Tradition of Counselling and Guidance

Islamic Counselling is a contemporary response that is rooted in Islamic teachings and relies on spiritual understanding from religion in day-to-day use. According to *Al Nasiha* services, "Islamic counselling is a consciousness, awareness of God in the counselling process that is different from the traditional counselling system as it is based on common beliefs and religious understanding. This shared understanding creates a trusting relationship between the client and counsellor, to live a more resourceful life."[16] In traditional Muslim communities, counselling is a

[12]Mumtaz F. Jafari, "Counseling Values and Objectives," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 10 (3), (1993): 326–339. https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v10i3.2490

[13]M. F. Jafari, "Counseling Values and Objectives," 326-339.

[14]C. Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* 21 (2), (1957): 95–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045357

[15]"What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?" https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/cognitive-behavioral

[16]Al Nasiha Services, https://alnasihaservices.org.uk/prophetic-medicine-therapies.html

part of shared beliefs and advice based on guidance. Many research scholars like Abdullah[17] highlighted that Islamic counselling is close to Western methodology, and operates on three doctrine principles: traditional healing-based model, possession, and Sufism. Central to counselling is the relationship that a counsellor builds with the individual. Significantly, it has been highlighted that the skill of empathy plays an integral role in effective counselling. Empathy has been described as being considerate while listening to the other person's internal world. This was a noble character trait in Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who carried himself with impeccable behavior.[18] The table below depicts a brief distinction between Counselling and Islamic Counselling.

Table 1. Differences between Counselling and and Islamic Counselling[19] adapted from Rassool (2015)

	Counselling (mainstream)	**Islamic Counselling**
Orientation	Judaco-Christian	Islamic
Religious relationship	Oppositional Secular	Integrated
Source of Knowledge	Main Made Theories Empirical Parochial	Divine revelation (Qur'aan) and Sunnah
What causes illness?	Biopsychosocial Factors	Biopsychosocial Factors and spiritual factors
Sound mental health	No Divine Intervention	Submission to God Integration of material and spiritual life
Values	Materialistic Socio-Moral Value Structure Value Laden Value Dependent	God consciousness Spiritual Divine will Islamic value and morality
Growth and Development	Psychosocial Development	Spiritual and psychosocial development
Focus	Limited focus on the physical world	Regard for spiritual aspects of human beings. Focus on the seen and unseen world
Purpose	Promote personal growth Self-understanding	Promotes the clear purpose and meaning of life

[17]Somaya Abdullah, "Islam and Counseling: Models of Practice in Muslim Communal Life," *Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 42, (2007): 42–55; Somaya Abdullah, "Islam and Counseling: Models of Practice in Muslim communal life," ERRCM. Online at http://errcm.blog.com/les/2013/09/psychosocial-services-in-islam.pdf

[18]G Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling.*

[19]Goolam Hussein Rassool, "Re-Examining the Anatomy of Islamic Psychotherapy and Counselling: Envisioned and Enacted Practices," *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal* 4, no. 2 (October 19, 2021): 133–143; G Hussein Rassool, *Islamic Counselling*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315694993;

	Counselling (mainstream)	Islamic Counselling
Process	Individual-based and individual focused	Mutual responsibility Social obligation Healthy altruism
Response to Illness	Psychological reactions	Spiritual reactions: patience and prayers
Relationship between mind and body	Mind-body interaction	Mind-body-soul interaction
Personal Development	Unlimited freedom	Bonded freedom
Intervention Strategies	Based on humanistic, cognitive behavioral and psychoanalytic interventions	Based on humanistic, cognitive behavioral and spiritual interventions
Dream Technique	Dreamwork not emphasized	Use of dream analysis
Undesired (negative) behavior	Rationalization	Therapy of repentance

2.3. Contemporary Efforts in Islamic Counselling

In the 21st century, the field of Islamic psychology, psychotherapy, and counselling has evolved as an emerging academic and practical domain. Practitioners and scholars, such as Malik Badri, Abdullah Rothman, and others,[20] have indicated a collective response towards Islamic psychology. There is a growing body of literature examining how Islamic principles can augment counselling practice. For instance, Hodge & Nadir (2008) argue that CBT's empirical, structured approach aligns with Islam's emphasis on knowledge and reason.[21] The Qur'ān itself encourages believers to use *reflection and logical thinking*, presenting rational arguments to convince and guide. Ashy (1999) notes that the Qur'ān frequently uses analytical reasoning to persuade – a method analogous to a therapist asking a client to examine evidence for and against a negative thought.[22]

Islamic integration advocates have drawn direct correspondences between Islamic concepts and counselling techniques: *ḥusn al-ẓann* (having a good opinion or positive assumption) is akin to cultivating positive cognitions and challenging cynical thoughts; *tawakkul* (trust in God) can help alleviate excessive worry by surrendering outcomes beyond one's control, similar to stress inoculation or acceptance strategies. At the same time, these authors caution that certain Western theories carry assumptions incompatible with Islam – for example, therapies rooted in existentialism sometimes deny or ignore the existence of God and divine purpose, which conflicts

[20]Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2018); Abdullah Rothman, Alisha Ahmed, and Rania Awaad, "The Contributions and Impact of Malik Badri," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 39 (1-2), (2022): 190–213. https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v39i1-2.3142

[21]D. R. Hodge, and A Nadir, "Moving toward Culturally Competent Practice with Muslims: Modifying Cognitive Therapy with Islamic Tenets," *Social Work* 53 (1), (2008): 31-41.

[22]M. A. Ashy, "Health and Illness from an Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Health* 38 (3), (1999): 241–258. https://doi. org/10. 1023/A: 10229 84718 79

with an Islamic ontology. A fully "Islamic counselling" model would not simply import Western techniques, but reformulate them within an Islamic worldview. This includes reorienting the goals of counselling (toward achieving *falāḥ*, success in this life and the hereafter) and grounding the counsellor-client relationship in Islamic ethics.[23]

Research on counselling Muslim youth, in particular, has accelerated in recent years. Cakmak (2021)[24] has highlighted that while Islamically integrated psychotherapy is gaining traction, relatively little has focused on adolescents, especially in school settings. This is a critical gap, since Muslim adolescents face unique stressors – identity struggles, discrimination and Islamophobia in schools, and conflicts between secular norms and religious values.[25]

The literature suggests a convergence of interest around integrating Islamic teachings with modern counselling: Muslim educators see value in incorporating faith into student guidance, and mental health professionals are exploring culturally adapted therapies for Muslims. For example, a needs analysis survey in Malaysia found that the majority of teachers believed integrating Islamic knowledge would help solve student problems. Students in that study expressed openness to creative counselling methods (like art therapy) that could potentially be imbued with religious themes. These findings point to an opportunity for schools, especially in Muslim-majority regions, but also Islamic schools in the West, to develop counselling programs that blend the best of both worlds.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach to develop an integrated Islamic school counselling framework. Rather than a primary data collection, the current methodology centers on library research and comparative textual analysis, examining Islamic scriptural and historical sources alongside contemporary counselling literature. The process involved several key steps:

1. A comprehensive literature review (as presented above) spanning psychology, education, and Islamic studies was conducted. Sources included academic journal articles, conference papers, classical Islamic texts (Qur'ān, hadith, and writings of early scholars), and case studies of counselling in Muslim educational settings.

2. Using an interpretive content analysis method, selected Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic traditions (Seerah stories and hadith) for themes relevant to counselling were examined. This entailed identifying examples of emotional counselling, conflict resolution, moral guidance, and pedagogical techniques in these sources.

3. To ensure robust understanding, classical exegeses (tafsir) and scholarly commentaries were referenced for textual analysis, to align the interpretations with orthodox Islamic views.

4. Documents encompassing (published articles and institutional reports) were identified,

[23]G. Hussein. Rassool, *Islāmic Counselling and Psychotherapy* (Routledge, 2024).

[2424]Zeynep Cakmak, "Counseling Muslim-American youth: Incorporating Islamic Values and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy," *The Fountain Magazine* 143, (2021) https://www.fountainmagazine.com/all-issues/2021/issue-143-sep-oct-2021/counseling-muslim-american-youth-incorporating-islamic-values-and-mindfulness-based-cognitive-therapy

[25]Nadin Abu Khalaf, Ashley. B. Woolweaver, Roslyn Reynoso Marmolejos, Grace A. Little, Katheryn Burnett, Dorothy L Espelage, "The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Students: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *School Psychology Review*, 52 (2), (2022): 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2022.2075710

which used counselling and faith-integrated guidance programs at the school level to highlight the practical implementation benefits and challenges associated with integrated Islamic teaching at the school level.

The study established a set of dimensions for comparing Islamic and Western counselling models, including the view of human nature, the goals of counselling, the counsellor-client relationship, techniques for behaviour or thought change, and the role of spirituality. These themes were systematically compared with findings from Islamic content analysis with equivalent concepts in person-centred therapy, CBT, and developmental counselling theories.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Emotional and Empathic Support: The Prophetic Model of Counselling

Islam is not a new religion; rather, it's a continuation of the one true religion that connotes the divine pathway taught to mankind by a series of Prophets and books. In its true sense, Islamic scripture and the Prophet Muhammad's life (*Seerah*) place enormous emphasis on compassion, mercy, and gentle counsel. One of Allah's names is *Al-Raḥmān* (The Merciful), and the Prophet is described in the Qur'ān as "a mercy to the worlds."[26] This merciful ethos underpins the Islamic approach to emotional support. The Prophet Muhammad can rightly be called history's greatest counsellor in terms of emotional intelligence and empathy. He was accessible to people's troubles and offered guidance with unmatched wisdom and kindness.

The term "prophet" comes from the Greek word prophḗtēs, meaning someone who communicates divine messages to people, sometimes including predictions about the future.[27] Prophet Muhammad's counselling was characterized by *individualisation* and deep empathy. He did not give one-size-fits-all answers, but rather tuned his advice to each person's context and temperament. Studies have made an effort to integrate religion with counselling practices, highlighting that Islamic psychology has emerged as a new dimension addressing spiritual, moral, and psychological problems; however, Saadia (2014) observed that the Prophet "paid meticulous attention to each individual, listening with sincere and caring focus, considering their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual state and capacity."[28]

This resonates strongly with Carl Rogers' person-centred approach, which posits that "unconditional positive regard, accurate empathy, and genuineness are the core conditions facilitating a client's growth."[29] Indeed, Muslim psychologists have asserted that Rogers' principles were anticipated by Islamic practice: the warmth and acceptance Rogers championed were present in the Prophet's dealings. Malik Badri, a pioneer of Islamically-oriented psychology, pointed out that both the Qur'ān and Hadith repeatedly stress being kind, gentle, and non-

[26]Al-Anbiya 21:107.

[27]Nani M. Sugandhi, Syamsu Yusuf LN, A, Juntika Nurihsan, Arie R. Riyadi, "Developing College Student's Readiness to Build Family Well-Being Inventory for Effective Premarital Counseling," *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Education and Technology* (ICET 2019), 518-521. https://doi.org/10.2991/icet-19.2019.131

[28]Casmini Casmini, and Enung Hasanah, "Professional and Personality Competency in Prophetic Counseling: A Phenomenological Study of School Counselors," *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology*, 5 (1), (2024): 21-42, https://doi.org/10.18196/ijiep.v5i1.20651; Saadia Z. Yunus, "The Prophet (PBUH): The Best of Counselors," January 28, 2014, https://messageinternational.org/the-prophet-pbuh-the-best-of-counselors/

[29]Carl Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 21* (2), (1957): 95–103. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045357

judgmental when helping others. "Psychoanalytic, Client-Centred, and Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy" highlights the effective role of CBT, which shows more alignment with Islamic teachings by promoting positive cognitive patterns and attitudes. He further discussed that behavioural activation corresponds to Islamic principles, engaging in good deeds and spiritual fulfilment that is a holistic need for Muslims.[30]

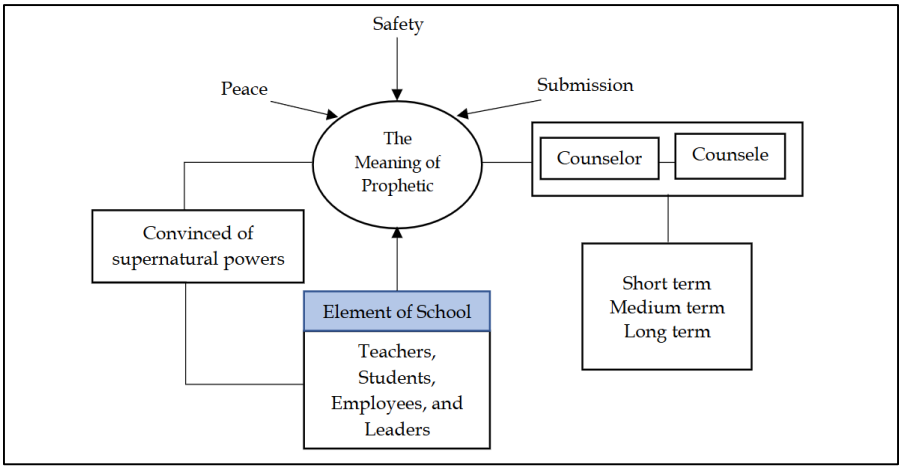

Figure 1. Prophetic Counselling and Guidance Model[31]

As evidence, Badri cites the Qur'ānic verse addressed to the Prophet: "It is by the mercy of Allah that you were gentle with them [your companions]; if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have fled from around you. So pardon them, seek forgiveness for them, and consult them in affairs…"[32] This verse encapsulates the *counsellor's ethos* in an Islamic paradigm: be gentle and approachable, forgive faults (i.e. don't hold a punitive attitude), and involve people in dialogue (consultation) regarding their issues. Badri interpreted this verse as a mandate that an Islamic counsellor "has to be warm, loving and gentle to the client," combining mercy with wisdom. Notably, the verse also alludes to *consultation* (*shūrā*) – implying a collaborative approach rather than authoritarian.[33]

4.2 Cognitive Guidance and Restructuring: Qur'ānic and Islamic Cognitive Frameworks

Beyond emotional support, effective counselling often involves cognitive guidance – helping individuals reframe negative thoughts, gain wisdom, and make better choices. The Qur'ān and Islamic tradition are rich in cognitive-behavioural principles, even if couched in religious terms.

[30]G. Hussein Rassool, "Psychoanalytic, Client-Centred, and Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy: Congruence or Dissonance with Islāmic Spirituality." In *Exploring the Intersection of Islāmic Spirituality and Psychotherapy* (Springer Nature, 2024): 103–119. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-72724-5_8

[31]Nooraini Othman, and Khairul 'Azmi Mohamad, "Applying the Main Concepts of Islamic Psychology to Islamic Counseling," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9 (5), (2019):383-393. https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v9-i5/5878

[32]Aal-e-Imran 3:159.

[33]Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2018).

One key concept is that beliefs and thoughts affect emotions. The Qur'ān repeatedly tells stories and parables that illustrate how one's understanding of life events shapes one's reaction. For instance, believers are reminded that trials and hardships are tests from Allah to develop one's character and faith.[34] Adopting this belief that suffering has purpose and potential reward can transform a person's emotional response from despair to patience and hope "this is analogous to the cognitive reframing used in CBT, where a painful event is viewed through a different lens that lessens the emotional harm." There are also direct exhortations in hadith about managing cognitions: "Think well of God and you will find Him in front of you" – encouraging optimism in God's help; or "None of you should die except assuming the best about Allah" (reported in Muslim), which combats existential anxiety with positive expectancy. These align with integrating a positive mindset and preventing cognitive distortions like catastrophizing or hopelessness.[35]

Islamic teachings place strong emphasis on the remembrance of God (*dhikr*) and being mindful of the present—an approach that resonates with the principles of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT). Interestingly, Cakmak (2021) notes a striking similarity between a modern mindfulness slogan and a saying by the 20th-century Muslim scholar Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960), as both advocate for focusing attention on the present moment.[36] Mindfulness in Islam is not just an inward secular attention, but is often tied to awareness of divine presence and gratitude. Regular practices like the five daily prayers also enforce a structured mindfulness and cognitive reset throughout the day, potentially protecting against rumination and stress accumulation. When counsellors integrate such practices (e.g., encouraging a student to take a brief pause for prayer or deep breathing with remembrance of God during stress), they are leveraging a built-in cognitive behavioural tool within the student's faith tradition.[37]

Furthermore, rational thinking and evidence-based argumentation are encouraged by the Qur'ān as tools for conviction. In Surah Al-Nahl (16:125), Allah instructs to "invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best."[38] The "wisdom" and "best argument" indicate using reason and evidence kindly. This rational aspect corresponds to how CBT asks clients to gather evidence for and against their negative thoughts, to realize those thoughts may be unfounded, such cases can be seen among school students who believes "I'm a total failure because I did poorly on a test" might be reminded of the Qur'ānic perspective that human worth is not defined by a single setback and that with effort and God's help, one can improve (implying the student should look at their overall abilities and other successes). The counsellor might ask, "Is it really true that you failed everything, or was it just one exam? What about subjects you do well in? What does Islam teach about despair and effort?" By doing so, the counsellor challenges the all-or-nothing thinking and introduces a balanced, hopeful thought consistent with Islamic teachings of perseverance (*sabr*) and trust in God

[34]Al-Baqara 2:155-157.

[35]Mardiana Mohamad, "Viewing Person-Centred Counselling from an Islamic Perspective," *IIUM Journal of Human Sciences* 5 (1), (2023): 39–49. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijohs.v5i1.238

[36]Zeynep Cakmak, "Counseling Muslim-American youth: Incorporating Islamic Values and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy," *The Fountain Magazine* 143, (2021) https://www.fountainmagazine.com/all-issues/2021/issue-143-sep-oct-2021/counseling-muslim-american-youth-incorporating-islamic-values-and-mindfulness-based-cognitive-therapy

[37]Angie Cucchi, "Integrating Cognitive Behavioural and Islamic Principles in Psychology and Psychotherapy: A Narrative Review," 4849-4870, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01576-8

[38]Surah Al-Nahl 16:125.

(*tawakkul*) after doing one's part.[39]

4.3 Behavioral and Moral Guidance: Aligning Conduct with Values

Counseling in schools often involves guiding students on behavioral issues whether it's conduct problems, habit formation, or moral decision-making. Islam is a religion that puts strong emphasis on translating belief into action (*amal*). Thus, Islamic teachings are replete with guidance on behavior, character (*akhlāq*), and self-improvement strategies, which are directly relevant to school counselling interventions. One foundational concept is enjoining good and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-n-nahy ʿan al- munkar*).[40] This is essentially a moral counselling mandate embedded in the faith: Muslims are collectively responsible to advise each other towards positive behaviour and to stay away from harmful behaviour. Historically, an office known as *hisbah* existed (and still exists in some form in certain Muslim societies) for overseeing public moral conduct, but at the interpersonal level, *hisbah* reflects a counselling-like role where a person or community counsellor guides others for the sake of societal well-being.[41] The *intention* and *method* prescribed for this are noteworthy: it should be done sincerely for God's sake, with wisdom and good advice (not with judgmental condemnation). This principle supports a school counsellor's role in addressing issues like bullying, cheating, or substance use among students through a values-based dialogue. The counsellor can appeal to the student's conscience and faith, encouraging repentance and better choices in a dignified manner rather than simply through punitive discipline.

Crucially, Islam frames moral guidance in terms of character strengths rather than just rule-following. The Prophet said, "I was only sent to perfect good character (*makārim al-akhlāq*)."[42] Virtues like honesty, humility, courage, modesty, and respect for parents/teachers are emphasized. A counsellor can work with a student not merely to obey school rules, but to internalize these virtues. For example, instead of saying "Don't lie because you'll get in trouble," an Islamically-integrated approach would discuss the value of *ṣidq* (truthfulness) as beloved to Allah, citing that the Qur'ān ranks truth-tellers highly, and that lying erodes trust (perhaps sharing the story of the boy who cried wolf or Islamic narratives about honesty). This helps the student develop moral reasoning that aligns with their faith identity. The integration of religious practice with counselling techniques is exemplified in some Muslim schools already. The case of the Indonesian Islamic boarding high school is illustrative of the counselling program that is adopted to improve student religiosity, combined with lectures on religious knowledge, daily supervised worship, and a faith-integrated approach.

[39]Zeenah Adam, and Colleen Ward, "Stress, Religious Coping and Wellbeing in Acculturating Muslims," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 10 (2), (2016), https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.10381607.0010.201, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jmmh/10381607.0010.201/--stress-religious-coping-and-wellbeing-in-acculturating?rgn=main;view=fulltext

[40]Aal-e-Imran 3:104, 110.

[41]Zuraimy Ali, Noraini Ismail, Azizi Abu Bakar, Khadher Ahmad, "The Importance of Hisbah in Managing Mental Health Issues From the Perspective of Maqasid Shariah," *Russian Law Journal* 11 (3), (2023): https://doi.org/10.52783/rlj.v11i3.1115

[42]*Al Adab al Mufrad,* Book 14, Hadith 273, https://sunnah.com/urn/2302710

4.4 Developmental and Educational Guidance: Nurturing Fitrah through Stages

Developmental counselling recognizes that children's needs and abilities evolve as they grow. Islam, likewise, acknowledges developmental stages and tailors' guidance accordingly. The concept of *fiṭrah* (the innate natural disposition towards goodness and belief in God) is said to be present in every child. The environment then either nurtures this *fiṭrah* or distorts it. This concept aligns with modern views that children have innate potentials and predispositions that education should bring out (rather than a blank slate to be written on). As mentioned earlier, a well-known hadith divides child development into three phases of seven years`. These stages are stated as follows:

4.4.1 Early Childhood (0–7 years)

"The child is a master for seven years," meaning indulge them in love and play. This stage corresponds to Erik Erikson's stage of developing trust and autonomy.[43] Islam encourages affection and playfulness with young children. The Prophet would play with children, let his grandsons climb on his back during prayer, and shorten prayers when hearing a baby cry (out of empathy for the mother's distress).

4.4.2 Middle Childhood (7–14 years)

The hadīth describes this as the stage of discipline and learning right from wrong, sometimes phrased as "the child is a servant (or student) for seven years" under the parents. By age 7, Islamic law generally considers children capable of a rudimentary understanding of duties – for example, children are to be taught to start performing the daily prayers at age 7 and may be more firmly instructed by 10.[44] This aligns with developmental psychology recognizing ages 7-12 as when moral reasoning and socialization crystallize (Piaget's concrete operational stage and Kohlberg's conventional morality stage).[45] In Islamic pedagogy, this is the *tamyīz* stage (discernment) where kids can differentiate between good and bad paths and actions.

4.3.3. Adolescence (14+ to early adulthood)

The hadith's final stage: "the child is a *wazīr* (advisor or friend) for seven years," roughly from 14 to 21. In Islam, puberty marks the onset of religious accountability (the *mukallaf* stage). By 15 (if not earlier), a young person is considered an adult in terms of obligations. Yet, psychologically, we know adolescence is a time of identity formation, seeking independence, and often rebelling against authority if it's too rigid. The Prophetic model preemptively addresses this by advising parents (and by extension, teachers/counsellors) to *change their approach* – become more of a mentor than a disciplinarian. Challenges like questioning faith, peer pressure, or mental health issues (anxiety, depression) often surface in adolescence; a counselor who can use Islamic concepts to discuss these (for example, talking about the concept of life as a test) can give the teen

[43]S. Wijaya, "The Roles of Parents Teachers Association in School-Age Children's Psychosocial Development According to Erik Erikson," *Edunesia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 3 (1), (2022): 45–54. https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v3i1.215

[44]Sulaiman b Abu Dawud Ashath, *Sunan Abu Dawud,* Book of Salat, Hadith no, 495, https://sunnah.com/abudawud:495

[45]Saul McLeod, "Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development," https://www.simplypsychology.org/kohlberg.html; Kendra Cherry, "The Concrete Operational Stage of Cognitive Development- How Kids Learn to Think Logically about Concrete Situations," https://www.verywellmind.com/concrete-operational-stage-of-cognitive-development-2795458

a framework to understand their struggles beyond just clinical terms. The support from faith, such as belonging to a Muslim youth group or having a mentor (*murshid*), could be something a counsellor facilitates as part of an intervention plan.

While the above strategies aim to address the conventional methodologies that can be used to counsel students at the school level, Islam prefers educational guidance that can be acquired only from useful knowledge. Hence, it is significant that a school counsellor working for the faith-integrated paradigm would always emphasize the correlation of guidance and instilling a sense of purpose in students. Thus, indicative of the idea that seeking knowledge is a weapon that can be used to serve humanity. Islamic teaching on development provides a robust approach to counsellors to guide youth/adolescents in their developmental stage to educate students regarding basic Islamic beliefs.

5. Conclusion

School counselling as an Islamic paradigm emerged as a new model to combat Western thought of psychology and counselling. This study contributed to the existing gap in literature by providing an integrated study that showcases a blend of counselling and guidance concerning Islamic teachings and principles. Thus, this study illustrated that the Prophetic model in Islam is a true depiction of guidance for counsellors, especially at the school level, which can integrate this faith-based model into counselling school students. Furthermore, by underlining the counselling for youth, this study underlined that Muslim counsellors still face obstacles while handling students who are living in isolation or away from their religious values and belief system. Additionally, it has been highlighted that integrating an Islamically integrated counselling approach, especially while performing the role as a teacher, counsellor, or guardian, it is significantly important to improvise strategies and methods that can effectively work for students at a young age. Thus, by opening a forum and direction for Islamic teachings and principles in school education, students can be drawn to live a purposeful life ahead.

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